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# Consciousness, ideas of ideas and animation in Spinoza's *Ethics*

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## ABSTRACT

In the following article, I aim to elucidate the meaning and scope of Spinoza's vocabulary related to 'consciousness'. I argue that Spinoza, at least in his *Ethics*, uses this notion consistently, although rarely. He introduces it to account for the knowledge we may have of the mind considered alone, as conceptually distinct from the body. This serves two purposes in Spinoza's *Ethics*: to explain our illusion of a free will, on the one hand, and to refer to the knowledge we have of our mind as something eternal, on the other. I contend, therefore, that we should not confuse Spinoza's technical use of the notion of 'consciousness' with the 'degrees of animation' that he also evokes in the *Ethics*. Consciousness, for Spinoza, is neither a faculty, nor a property specific to certain minds or ideas. Furthermore, consciousness does not come in degrees. Indeed, Spinoza's account of consciousness is not intended to differentiate kinds of minds in terms of awareness of their respective ideas.

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## 1. Introduction

The debate around Spinoza's understanding of 'consciousness' has recently attracted a great deal of attention.<sup>1</sup> The main questions raised by scholars

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<sup>1</sup>To refer to Spinoza's texts, I use the following abbreviations: E = *Ethics* (followed by the part number; d = definition; a = axiom; p = proposition; d = demonstration, when it appears after a proposition number; c = corollary; s = scholium; post = postulate; lem = lemma; Ad = definition of an affect; exp = explanation; Pref = Preface; App = Appendix); TIE = *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* (the division into sections is the one proposed by Bruder, also followed by Curley); Ep = Letter. All English quotations of Spinoza are from Edwin Curley's translation (*The Collected Works of Spinoza*), hereafter abbreviated as C. I have retained his use of the italics to indicate when 'or' translates the Latin *sive* or *seu*. Generally, *sive* and *seu* mark an equivalence, rather than an alternative. References to the Latin version of Spinoza's works are to Carl Gebhardt's edition (*Opera*), hereafter abbreviated as G.

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concern how Spinoza justifies and explains the existence of conscious life in the world, whether he separates self-conscious entities from non-self-conscious entities, and, further, whether he acknowledges the existence of unconscious ideas within the human mind. To a good approximation, we may divide the participants in this discussion into two main groups. Some scholars claim that Spinoza's system lacks the conceptual resources necessary to deliver a consistent theory of consciousness.<sup>2</sup> Others, instead, argue for the presence of the sufficient elements, in Spinoza's philosophy, to account for the phenomenon of human consciousness and the difference between conscious and unconscious ideas. Advocates of this view have not reached uniform agreement, however, since they employ distinct arguments and reach quite diverse conclusions that often conflict with each other.<sup>3</sup> A few commentators even suggest that a Spinozist perspective on the problem of consciousness might provide a suitable theoretical background for further progress in contemporary cognitive sciences.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the issues surrounding Spinoza's account of consciousness seem to follow from some fundamental principles of Spinoza's metaphysics – namely, his theory of thought-extension parallelism,<sup>5</sup> and his definition of

<sup>2</sup>Among them, we may count Margaret Dauler Wilson ('Objects, Ideas and "Minds"'), Jonathan Bennett (*A Study of Spinoza's "Ethics"*, 188–91), Jon Miller ('The Status of Consciousness in Spinoza's Concept of Mind') and Michael LeBuffe, who persuasively argues that 'the severity of the problem – together with other pressing concerns – pushes readers to find a direct account of selective consciousness in Spinoza's remarks about consciousness where there is none' ('Theories about Consciousness in Spinoza's *Ethics*', 533). Michael Della Rocca's first take was also very sceptical: 'despite the need for a coherent theory of consciousness in Spinoza', he writes, 'he does not provide one' (*Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza*, 9).

<sup>3</sup>Earlier in his career, Edwin Curley held that Spinoza's account of human consciousness was provided by Spinoza's theory of the 'ideas of ideas', arguing that 'the existence of ideas of ideas is proven only for human minds' (*Spinoza's Metaphysics*, 126–8). He later refined his position and referred the possibility of accounting for blurred perceptions of many bodily states to Spinoza's theory of confused knowledge (*Behind the Geometrical Method*, 72–3). Lee Rice ('Reflexive Ideas in Spinoza') basically agrees with Curley's later position, whereas Christopher Martin ('Consciousness in Spinoza's Philosophy of Mind') proposes to emend Curley's first interpretation by considering complexity of the human mind and body as a criterion for having ideas of ideas. Étienne Balibar contends that 'consciousness' in the *Ethics* has two different meanings: the first belongs to the first kind of knowledge 'and it is practically identical with moral conscience', the second to the third kind of knowledge ('A Note on "Consciousness/Conscience" in Spinoza's *Ethics*', 138). Despite his initial scepticism, Della Rocca successively argues for a theory of degrees of consciousness in Spinoza, which would parallel degrees of 'animation' and degrees of adequacy of ideas (*Spinoza*, 115–16). I will later recall and discuss his position in greater detail, along with those of Don Garrett ('Representation and Consciousness in Spinoza's Naturalistic Theory of the Imagination'), Steven Nadler ('Spinoza and Consciousness'), Andrea Sangiacomo ('Adequate Knowledge and Bodily Complexity in Spinoza's Account of Consciousness'), Syliane Malinowski-Charles (*Affects et conscience chez Spinoza*) and Eugene Marshall (*The Spiritual Automaton*).

<sup>4</sup>Frederick Mills ('A Spinozist Approach to the Conceptual Gap in Consciousness Studies') argues that Spinoza's metaphysics of substance and attributes can suggest a solution to the so-called 'hard problem' of consciousness (see Chalmers, 'Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness'). Steven Nadler ('Spinoza and Consciousness') envisages similarities between his interpretation of Spinoza's account of consciousness and contemporary studies in 'embodied cognition'.

<sup>5</sup>Thought-extension parallelism can be considered a particular case within the general framework of Spinoza's so-called parallelism, according to which

the human mind as the idea of the human body.<sup>6</sup> Spinoza contends that '[t]he order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things' (E2p7; C.I, 451/G.II, 89). For this reason, he argues, the idea of a human body – which exists as a mode of thinking in God's attribute of thought – must include knowledge of everything that happens to its object, i.e. the human body – which is a mode of God's attribute of extension.<sup>7</sup> But the mind of a human individual is, in fact, the idea of her human body. Hence, Spinoza concludes, the human mind 'perceives' everything that occurs to its corresponding body with the same order and connection of causes.<sup>8</sup> The same conclusion can be drawn regarding all existing things. He writes:

The things we have shown so far are completely general and do not pertain more to man than to other individuals, all of which, though in different degrees, are nevertheless animate. For of each thing there is necessarily an idea in God, of which God is the cause in the same way as he is of the idea of the human body. And so, whatever we have said of the idea of the human body must also be said of the idea of any thing.

(E2p13s; C.I, 498/G.II, 96)

In a nutshell, nothing can happen in a body that is not perceived by a corresponding mind or idea. This thesis, sometimes dubbed Spinoza's 'panpsychism',<sup>9</sup> presents two different, albeit interrelated, conundrums. On the one hand, the claim that the human mind must perceive everything that happens in the human body is at odds with ordinary experience.<sup>10</sup> On the

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whether we conceive nature under the attribute of extension, or under the attribute of thought, or under any other attribute, we shall find one and the same order, or one and the same connection of causes, i.e., that the same things follow one another.

(E2p7s; C.I, 451/G.II, 90)

Thought-extension parallelism is, however, also the only relevant case for us, since we only perceive modes of thought and extension (E2a5. See also Ep64).

<sup>6</sup>First, Spinoza identifies the human mind with an idea, that is, a mode of God's attribute of thought (E2p11). Then, he claims that '[t]he object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body, or a certain mode of extension which actually exists, and nothing else' (E2p13; C.I, 457/G.II, 96).

<sup>7</sup>For whatever happens in the object of any idea, the knowledge of that thing is necessarily in God, insofar as he is considered to be affected by the idea of the same object, i.e., insofar as he constitutes the mind of some thing.

(E2p12d; C.I, 457/G.II, 95)

<sup>8</sup>'Whatever happens in the object of the idea constituting the human mind', Spinoza writes,

must be perceived by the human mind [*ab humana mente debet percipi*], or there will necessarily be an idea of that thing in the mind; i.e., if the object of the idea constituting a human mind is a body, nothing can happen in that body which is not perceived by the mind.

(E2p12; C.I, 456–7/G.II, 95)

<sup>9</sup>See Mascarenhas, 'Consciousness, Representation, Thought and Extension', 98, n9; Miller, 'The Status of Consciousness in Spinoza's Concept of Mind', 212; Della Rocca, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza*, 7–9, and Spinoza, 110; Jorgensen, 'Seventeenth-Century Theories of Consciousness'.

<sup>10</sup>For a useful example, see Della Rocca, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza*, 9:

other hand, few scholars seem willing to concede that all bodies may have a mind and knowledge of their bodily states, especially if this knowledge is to be understood in terms of consciousness and self-awareness.<sup>11</sup> The seeming lack of a 'selective theory of conscious awareness' in Spinoza's philosophy of mind, to borrow Jonathan Bennett's words,<sup>12</sup> is therefore regarded as a serious, twofold problem. The scholarly consensus is that a theory capable of distinguishing conscious minds and ideas from unconscious ones could help solve both these issues.

In this article, I aim to contribute to this long-standing debate by elucidating the meaning and scope of Spinoza's vocabulary related to 'consciousness'. I argue that Spinoza, at least in his *Ethics*, makes a limited, yet consistent use of some crucial Latin terms, broadly translatable as 'consciousness' or 'being conscious (of something)'. He introduces these notions to account for the knowledge we may have of our mind considered as distinct from our body.<sup>13</sup> This serves two purposes in Spinoza's *Ethics*: first, to explain our illusion of a free will, and second, to refer to the knowledge we have of our mind as something eternal. I contend, therefore, that we should not confuse Spinoza's technical use of the notion of 'consciousness' with the 'degrees of animation' evoked in the scholium quoted above. Being conscious of one's own mental states, for Spinoza, neither results from a particular faculty of the human mind, nor is it a property specific only to certain minds or ideas.<sup>14</sup> Consciousness is not something that comes in degrees either. In fact, Spinoza's account of

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Spinoza says that human minds have ideas of, for example, all the changes that take place in the human body. [...] whatever the strength of Spinoza's reasons for this view, it is highly counterintuitive. It certainly seems that I have no idea of what chemical reactions are currently taking place in my pancreas, for example. One way to soften this intuitive reaction against Spinoza's position here might be for Spinoza to claim that my ideas of the changes in my pancreas are not conscious ones.

<sup>11</sup>See again Della Rocca, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza*, 9:

Spinoza holds that such objects as rocks and hammers are, in some sense, animate and possess mental states. The counterintuitive force of this thesis might be lessened if Spinoza could explain why, although rocks have mental states, none of this mental state is conscious. On such an account, even if rocks do have thoughts, they would not have thoughts in the same, special way that we quite often do.

<sup>12</sup>Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's 'Ethics'*, 181. See also LeBuffe, 'Theories about Consciousness in Spinoza's *Ethics*', 532.

<sup>13</sup>In E4p8d, Spinoza specifies that this distinction is not a real distinction, but a conceptual one, equal to the one between the idea of the body, and the idea of that idea.

<sup>14</sup>Strictly speaking, consciousness cannot be considered a faculty of the human mind, since Spinoza's philosophy of mind does not allow for faculties of the mind at all (see E2p48s). On the other hand, I do not exclude that the capability of being conscious of one's own mental states could be treated, in Spinoza's terms, as a property of the human mind, as long as this capability can be consistently deduced from the definition of the human mind as the idea of the human body. Yet, if it is a property, it is not specific to human minds only, since, as I argue in the following sections of the article, the argument by which its existence is deduced extends to all minds, or ideas of bodies. I thank an anonymous reviewer for having brought this point to my attention.

consciousness is not conceived to differentiate between kinds of minds in terms of awareness of their respective ideas.

## 2. The illusion of free will and the ‘ideas of ideas’

Many of the commentators who have looked for an account of consciousness in Spinoza have also noted the scarcity of passages in the *Ethics* where ‘consciousness’ is effectively brought up.<sup>15</sup> Disappointingly, in none of these places does Spinoza provide a conclusive definition of what consciousness is, or an explanation of how it originates in nature. If we turn to the Latin version of the *Ethics* (G.II, 43–308), we can find examples of different uses of the Latin expressions *conscientia* and *conscius esse*. In some cases, the term *conscientia* apparently retains its traditional moral and normative sense, and is better rendered into English as ‘conscience’.<sup>16</sup> The remaining occurrences, broadly corresponding to the English terms ‘consciousness’ and ‘to be conscious’, can be grouped into three main sets.

All passages included in the first set concern Spinoza’s rebuttal of free will. To deny the existence of free will, Spinoza must provide a plausible explanation as to why human beings believe themselves to be free, and how they are led to erroneously ascribe to themselves a free faculty of will, capable of acting upon the body and independently of the body. For example, as part of a reply addressed to those who affirm that ‘they know by experience, that it is in the mind’s power alone both to speak and to be silent, and to do many other things which they therefore believe depend on the mind’s decision’ (E3p2s; C.I, 495/G.II, 142), Spinoza writes:

Experience itself, no less clearly than reason, teaches that men believe themselves free because they are conscious [*sunt conscii*] of their own actions, and ignorant of the causes by which they are determined, that the decisions of the mind are nothing but the appetites themselves, which therefore vary as the disposition of the body varies.

(E3p2s; C.I, 496–497/G.II, 143)

The same thesis, formulated with almost identical diction, is also found in E1App (C.I, 440/G.II, 78), E2p35s (C.I, 473/G.II, 117) and E4Pref (C.I, 545/G.II, 207). Spinoza’s choice of words does not seem casual, since they involve

<sup>15</sup>See Balibar, ‘A Note on “Consciousness/Conscience” in Spinoza’s *Ethics*’, 129; Martin, ‘Consciousness in Spinoza’s Philosophy of Mind’, 269; Miller, ‘The Status of Consciousness in Spinoza’s Concept of Mind’, 207; LeBuffe, ‘Theories about Consciousness in Spinoza’s *Ethics*’, 532; Marshall, *The Spiritual Automaton*, 106.

<sup>16</sup>See E3p18s2 (G.II, 155), E3Ad17 (G.II, 195) and E4p47s (G.II, 246), where Spinoza addresses the affect of remorse by means of the Latin expression *conscientiae morsus* (literally, the ‘bite of conscience’). E4App32, instead, presents us with a use of the verb *conscius esse* which is ambiguously interpretable in both a normative and a descriptive sense. For useful clarifications on the meaning of the Latin *conscientia* in Spinoza’s time, and its traditional reference to the notions of ‘conscience’ and *synderesis*, see Balibar, ‘A Note on “Consciousness/Conscience” in Spinoza’s *Ethics*’, 127–9, and Miller, ‘The Status of Consciousness in Spinoza’s Concept of Mind’, 204–7.

the notion of someone 'being conscious' of her actions, volitions and appetites in each reference. As we have seen, the passage just quoted ends by establishing a correlation between decisions of the mind, appetites and dispositions of the body. Spinoza stresses this correlation a few lines later in the same scholium:

Both the decision of the mind and the appetite and the determination of the body by nature exist together – or rather are one and the same thing, which we call a decision when it is considered under, and explained through, the attribute of thought, and which we call a determination when it is considered under the attribute of extension and deduced from the laws of motion and rest.

(E3p2s; C.I, 497/G.II, 144)

Spinoza is both restating a metaphysical thesis and making a terminological point. What we usually distinguish as decisions (or volitions) in our mind, and determinations (or dispositions) of the body, are really one and the same thing, although conceived under different attributes. They follow the same order and connection of causes because, according to Spinoza's thought-extension parallelism, 'the order of actions and passions of our body is, by nature, at one with the order of actions and passions of the mind' (E3p2s; C.I, 494/G.II, 141). This conclusion, however, poses an obvious problem: if our mind and our body are so joined to each other, how do we get to conceive of our appetite separately from and independently of our bodily drives – forming eventually the idea of an autonomous and unconstrained spiritual faculty, namely, our 'will'? Spinoza provides the answer in passages taken from, or related to, the second set of occurrences.

The occurrences of the second set are from the Third and Fourth Parts of the *Ethics*, and they all refer to a group of propositions in the Second Part (E2p20–23), where Spinoza exposes his so-called theory of the 'ideas of ideas'.<sup>17</sup> To begin with, in E3p9, Spinoza affirms:

Both insofar as the mind has clear and distinct ideas, and insofar as it has confused ideas, it strives, for an indefinite duration, to persevere in its being and it is conscious of this striving it has [*hujus sui conatus est conscia*].

(C.I 499/G.II, 147)

Each thing, according to Spinoza, strives to persevere in its being (E3p6). This 'striving' is identified by Spinoza with the power of the thing itself and its

<sup>17</sup>As soon as the expression *conscius esse* is put forth, the demonstrations of both E3p9 and E3p30 refer to E2p23. The use of *conscientia* in E3Ad1exp explicitly mirrors E3p9s, and also refers to E2p23. The demonstration of E4p8 refers to both E2p21 and E2p22, in order to address our consciousness of our affects of joy and sadness (such consciousness being, according to Spinoza, nothing different than our knowledge of good and evil), while E4p19d and E4p64d refer in turn to E4p8. E2p20 is never explicitly evoked, but it provides the grounds for E2p21–23.



essence (E3p7).<sup>18</sup> Finally, in E3p9d, Spinoza asserts that the mind is necessarily conscious of the striving by which it perseveres in its being, as a mode of thought, through ‘ideas of the body’s affections’ (C.I, 499–500/G.II, 147). This conclusion, Spinoza notes, is entailed by E2p23, which claims that ‘[t]he mind does not know itself, except insofar as it perceives the ideas of the affections of the body’ (C.I, 468/G.II, 110). What it means for the mind to know itself by perceiving the ideas of the affections of the body is explained in the three preceding propositions (E2p20–22), where Spinoza introduces the notion of ‘idea of an idea’ (*idea ideæ*).

God, Spinoza asserts, must have ideas of all its modes – including the modes comprehended in the attribute of thought. He concludes, therefore, that in thought there must also exist the ideas of the ideas – among them, the idea of the human mind (E2p20d). In line with the general formulation of parallelism, according to which the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things, in E2p21 Spinoza maintains that ‘[t]his idea of the mind is united to the mind in the same way as the mind is united to the body’ (C.I, 467/G.II, 109). The idea of the human mind, that is, follows the same order of causes of its object, and is related to the human mind in the same way as the latter is related to its own object – i.e. the human body. In E2p19, Spinoza demonstrates that the mind knows the body ‘through ideas of affections by which the body is affected’ (C.I, 466/G.II, 107). Similarly, E2p22 demonstrates that the mind has the ideas of the ideas of the affections of the body, which finally account for the existence of our knowledge of our mind and its ideas (as per E2p23 and its demonstration, to which E3p9 refers). Thus, in the scholium of E2p21, Spinoza points out:

The idea of the mind, I say, and the mind itself follow in God from the same power of thinking and by the same necessity. For the idea of the mind, i.e., the idea of the idea [*idea ideæ*], is nothing but the form of the idea insofar as this is considered as a mode of thinking without relation to the object.

(E2p21s; C.I, 467/G.II, 109)

This passage discloses the answer for which we have been looking. The ‘ideas of ideas’ theory accounts for the possibility of conceiving of our mind (along with its affections, volitions, striving and everything that can be regarded as a mode of thinking constituting its actual essence) as ‘a mode of thinking without relation to the object’. This explains, among other things, how humans can conceive of their wills as something distinct from the determinations of their bodies. This possibility, however, combined with our ignorance of the causes that necessarily determine us to will or do anything, is at

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<sup>18</sup> ‘The power of each thing, or the striving [*potentia sive conatus*] by which it (either alone or with others) does anything [...], is nothing but the given, or actual, essence of the thing itself’ (E3p7d; C.I, 499/G.II, 146). The scholarship usually refers to such ‘striving’ by maintaining the original Latin term, *conatus*.

the origin of an error (i.e. the error of conceiving us as endowed with a *free* will). Therefore, as we have seen previously, in E3p2s Spinoza clarifies that the decisions of the mind, the appetite and the determinations of the body are one and the same thing, called by different names according to the attribute through which they are conceived. He makes a similar point in E3p9s, after having demonstrated that the mind is conscious of its striving, or *conatus* (i.e. of its essence), through the ideas of the ideas of the affections of the body.<sup>19</sup> 'When this striving is related only to the mind', Spinoza remarks, 'it is called will' (C.I, 500/G.II, 147). Conversely, when applied to both the mind and the body, it is called 'appetite':

This appetite, therefore, is nothing but the very essence of man, from whose nature there necessarily follow those things that promote his preservation. And so man is determined to do those things. Between appetite and desire there is no difference, except that desire is generally related to men insofar as they are conscious of their appetites. So *desire* can be defined as *appetite together with consciousness of the appetite* [*appetitus cum ejusdem conscientia*].

(E3p9s; C.I, 500/G.II, 147–148. Italics in original)

The point of the last definition is clarified in E3Ad1. First, Spinoza defines 'desire' differently, as 'man's very essence, insofar as it is conceived to be determined, from any given affection of it, to do something' (C.I, 531/G.II, 190). Then, he provides an explanation as to why 'desire' has replaced 'appetite' in outlining a 'human's very essence'. Following the same scheme first envisaged in E3p2s, and then noted in E3p9s, he stresses how 'impulse', 'appetite', 'will' and 'desire' are only different names by which we address the same striving, or essence of a human, conceived under different attributes:

I really recognize no difference between human appetite and desire. For whether a man is conscious of his appetite or not, the appetite still remains one and the same. And so – not to seem to commit a tautology – I did not wish to explain desire by appetite, but was anxious to so define it that I would comprehend together all the strivings of human nature that we signify by the name of appetite [*appetitus*], will [*voluntas*], desire [*cupiditas*], or impulse [*impetus*].

(E3Ad1exp; C.I, 531/G.II, 190)

As we have seen, 'appetite' refers simultaneously to the human striving conceived under the attribute of extension (as an 'impulse' of the body) and

<sup>19</sup>To be sure, in E3p9d Spinoza writes that 'the mind is necessarily conscious of itself through ideas of the body's affections', without mentioning ideas of ideas, and despite the reference to E2p23 which accompanies the statement. One possible explanation, which does not contradict my reading, is that Spinoza may have directly referred to ideas of the body's affections, since they provide the object of the ideas through which the mind knows itself and its striving. Another explanation could be the way in which E2p23 is formulated, which does not mention ideas of ideas either, but only 'ideas of the affections of the body'. Only by perceiving ideas of the affections of the body, Spinoza claims in E2p23, the mind has knowledge of itself. As we have seen, however, 'to perceive an idea', in Spinoza's account, means to have the idea of it, to have knowledge of it, and finally to be conscious of it.

under the attribute of thought (as our 'will'). The expression 'appetite *with* consciousness of it', found in E3p9s and recalled in E3Ad1exp, is meant to include the striving of both body and mind *plus* the knowledge that the mind has of its striving through the ideas of the ideas of the affections of the body.<sup>20</sup> This accounts, for example, for the fact that not only do we want something, or strive for it, but we also know that we want something or strive for it – in one word, we 'desire' it.<sup>21</sup> Understood in such a way, Spinoza concludes, the notion of 'desire' involves all manner of conceiving the human actual essence. According to this reading, the introduction of the clause 'whether a man is conscious of his appetite or not' does not imply anything about the possible existence of unconscious minds or ideas.<sup>22</sup> Spinoza is only remarking that our 'desire' – understood as the striving of both our body and mind, reflected into a second order of ideas of ideas – is only one way in which to conceive of one's appetite or essence. Whether we conceive of an individual as conscious of her striving or as uniquely determined by her bodily impulses, 'the appetite still remains one and the same', Spinoza asserts. Thus, the fact that we also have knowledge of our appetite in terms of desire, or awareness of our will, shall not lead us to believe that our will is free.

### 3. Animation, eternity of the mind and the 'third kind of knowledge'

The references to consciousness analysed so far do not provide any criterion to distinguish between conscious and unconscious ideas. On the contrary,

<sup>20</sup>Spinoza explains he introduced the notion of 'affection' in his definition of desire precisely to account for the fact that the mind is aware of its striving:

I could have said that desire is man's very essence, insofar as it is conceived to be determined to do something. But from this definition (by E2p23) it would not follow that the mind could be conscious of its desire, *or* appetite. Therefore, in order to involve the cause of this consciousness, it was necessary (by the same proposition) to add: *insofar as it is conceived, from some given affection of it, to be determined* etc.

(E3Ad1exp; C.I, 531/G.II, 190. Italics in original)

<sup>21</sup>See, for comparison, the use that Spinoza makes of E2p20 in E2p43d, to justify the fact that 'he [...] who knows a thing truly, must at the same time have an adequate idea, *or* true knowledge, of his own knowledge' (C.I, 479/G.II, 123–4).

<sup>22</sup>Miller ('The Status of Consciousness in Spinoza's Concept of Mind', 217) follows Wilson ('Objects, Ideas and "Minds"', 134) in reading this statement as suggesting a distinction between conscious and unconscious minds or ideas. According to Balibar, the statement implies that consciousness is 'the specific difference', or 'the specific degree or quality which transforms appetite into desire', and could be rephrased as such: 'some appetites are voluntary, others not' ('A Note on "Consciousness/Conscience" in Spinoza's *Ethics*', 131–2). Contrarily to Balibar, I do not think Spinoza is reducing conscious or voluntary appetites to a subset of all appetites. That seems to me exactly the thesis that Spinoza intends to confute. Moreover, and more importantly, Spinoza is not contending that an appetite may 'transform' itself into a voluntary one, by means of consciousness. Rather, it is true that for Spinoza all appetites are (also) volitions of the mind, and that the mind is necessarily conscious of its volitions by means of the ideas of the ideas of the affections of the body. Hence, the mind is also said to 'desire'.

the universality of the demonstrations employed by Spinoza seems to entail that all bodies have a corresponding mind, along with the idea, or knowledge, of it<sup>23</sup> – that is, what Spinoza refers to as ‘consciousness’. Having noted this, Spinoza commentators concerned about the ensuing paradoxes related to panpsychism have often dismissed the ‘ideas of ideas’ theory as an unsuitable candidate for an account of human consciousness.<sup>24</sup> Either the theory of the ideas of ideas is not meant to provide a higher-order account of human consciousness, they maintain, or else it fails to reach its goal.<sup>25</sup> As a consequence, there have recently been some attempts to look for a different understanding of ‘consciousness’ in Spinoza’s *Ethics*. These attempts have focused on passages included in our third, and last, set of occurrences.

These occurrences are all given in the Fifth Part of the *Ethics*. Most of the references to consciousness of the third set are related to Spinoza’s theories of the eternity of the mind and the ‘third kind of knowledge’.<sup>26</sup> In not one of them, however, does Spinoza mention or explicitly recall the ‘ideas of ideas’ theory. In E5p31s, Spinoza characterizes the ability of the mind to attain knowledge of the third kind in terms of consciousness of the self and God. ‘The more each of us is able to achieve in this kind of knowledge’, he writes, ‘the more he is conscious of himself and of God’ (C.I, 610/G.II, 300). Then, in E5p39, he relates the eternal part of a mind to the capabilities of the corresponding body. Spinoza affirms that ‘[h]e who has a body capable of a great many things has a mind whose greatest part is eternal’ (C.I, 614/

<sup>23</sup>See E2p13s, quoted in the introduction, as well as E2p43d, where Spinoza characterises the demonstration of E2p20 as ‘universal’ (C.I, 479/G.II, 123).

<sup>24</sup>Scholars who nevertheless have presented Spinoza’s theory of ‘ideas of ideas’ as a theory of selective consciousness are Curley (*Spinoza’s Metaphysics*), Rice (‘Reflexive Ideas in Spinoza’), Martin (‘Consciousness in Spinoza’s Philosophy of Mind’), and, more recently, Sangiacomo (‘Adequate Knowledge and Bodily Complexity in Spinoza’s Account of Consciousness’). He argues that ideas of ideas can only be adequate; hence, he writes, consciousness in Spinoza only refers to adequate knowledge (‘Adequate Knowledge and Bodily Complexity in Spinoza’s Account of Consciousness’, 82–4). Building on the same hypothesis – i.e. that ideas of ideas can only be adequate – Syliane Malinowski-Charles recently argued for the opposite conclusion, namely, that ideas of ideas cannot account for human consciousness (‘On the Difference between Consciousness and *Idea Ideæ* in Spinoza’, paper presented at McGill University, Montreal, June 17, 2016). I find both readings difficult to reconcile with Spinoza’s parallelism. Since the order and connection of the ideas necessarily follows the order and connection of their objects, all the elements that account for the inadequacy of the ideas of my bodily affections (that is, incompleteness, partiality and passivity) shall also be tracked in the order of the ideas of the ideas. And indeed, Spinoza’s theory of the ideas of ideas seems also intended to support the claim that the awareness one may have of her mind and its affections, through the ideas of the ideas of the body’s affections, can deliver a great deal of (conscious) inadequate knowledge about its objects – to the same extent and in the same way as ideas of bodily affections deliver inadequate knowledge about one’s own body (see E2p29, its demonstration and corollary).

<sup>25</sup>‘If this were a theory of consciousness or awareness [...], Bennett famously contends, ‘it would be absurdly excessive’ (A *Study of Spinoza’s ‘Ethics’*, 188). See also Wilson, ‘Objects, Ideas and “Minds”’, 135; Nadler, ‘Spinoza and Consciousness’, 584–5; LeBuffe, ‘Theories about Consciousness in Spinoza’s *Ethics*’, 556; Marshall, *The Spiritual Automaton*, 111.

<sup>26</sup>Only the occurrences found in E5p42s (C.I, 616–17/G.II, 307–8) do not immediately refer to intuitive knowledge and the eternity of the mind. They seem to do it mediately, by referring first to blessedness, ‘which arises from the third kind of knowledge’, then to the opposition between the ‘wise man’, who can attain ‘peace of mind’, and the ‘ignorant’.

G.II, 304). This correlation is then rephrased, again in terms of consciousness, in the following scholium:

He who, like an infant or child, has a body capable of very few things, and very heavily dependent on external causes, has a mind which considered solely in itself is conscious of almost nothing of itself, or of God, or of things. On the other hand, he who has a body capable of a great many things, has a mind which considered only in itself is very much conscious of itself, and of God, and of things.

(E5p39s; C.I, 614/G.II, 305)

This last paragraph, in particular, has often been read in connection with Spinoza's controversial remarks on universal animation – found in E2p13s, and quoted in the introduction to this article – from which the whole problem of the status of consciousness in Spinoza's *Ethics* originates. Indeed, in the second part of E2p13s, Spinoza proceeds to explain how we should understand his claim that all individuals are animate, 'though in different degrees':

We [...] cannot deny that ideas differ among themselves, as the objects themselves do, and that one is more excellent than the other, and contains more reality, just as the object of the one is more excellent than the object of the other and contains more reality. [...] I say this in general, that in proportion as a body is more capable than others of doing many things at once, or being acted on in many ways at once, so its mind is more capable than others of perceiving many things at once. And in proportion as the actions of a body depend more on itself alone, and as other bodies concur with it less in acting, so its mind is more capable of understanding distinctly.

(E2p13s; C.I, 458/G.II, 97)

The similarity between E2p13s and E5p39s has prompted scholars to assimilate Spinoza's reference to 'degrees of animation' to a theory implying the existence of different degrees of consciousness in nature. Don Garrett, for example, equates degrees of consciousness with degrees of power of thinking expressed by different minds or ideas (understanding, by the 'power of thinking' of an idea, its degree of perfection and reality, and its effectiveness in determining an individual's striving). 'This identification', he argues, 'is almost irresistibly implied by the conjunction of E2p13s with E5p39s' ('Representation and Consciousness in Spinoza's Naturalistic Theory of the Imagination', 23). Steven Nadler substitutes degrees of power of thinking with degrees of bodily complexity: '[c]onsciousness for Spinoza, [...] is a certain complexity in thinking that is the correlate of the complexity of a body' ('Spinoza and Consciousness', 575). He thus concludes that

the more conscious a mind is, the more active and powerful it is, not because consciousness is identical with power but because both of these features of the mind are grounded [...] in the same fact about the body, namely, its complexity.

('Spinoza and Consciousness', 594)

Michael Della Rocca, instead, claims that 'Spinoza's notion of degrees of animation can usefully be understood in terms of degrees of independence of outside causes and thus in terms of degrees of confusion and adequacy', and winds up affirming that 'Spinoza similarly ties degrees of consciousness to a mind's degree of independence of outside causes in E5p39s' (*Spinoza*, 115–116). Unfortunately, such 'almost irresistible' connection between the two scholia is in fact unjustified, if this connection is meant to equate degrees of animation of individuals with corresponding degrees of awareness of their own mental states – whether such degrees are conceived of in terms of power of thinking, complexity of the body or adequacy of ideas.<sup>27</sup>

As we can see from E2p13s, Spinoza provides two different criteria on which the degree of animation of an individual – i.e. the perfection and excellence of its mind or idea – is grounded. The first criterion refers to the general capability of a mind of having ideas, and depends on the general capability of a body of performing many different things and undergoing many different modifications at once – briefly put, its capability of being affected in many different ways. This claim is clarified in the demonstration of E2p14: since the mind – i.e. the idea of the body – must perceive everything that happens in its object, the more a body is affected and undergoes different modifications, the more ideas also exist in the corresponding mind. The second criterion, instead, refers to the capability of a mind of understanding distinctly the things – that is, to its capability of having adequate ideas. The more the actions performed by a body depend on the nature of the body alone, the more, in parallel, the mind is the 'adequate, or formal, cause' (E5p31d; C.I, 610/G.II, 299) of the corresponding ideas, which can be clearly and distinctly conceived through the nature of the mind alone (according

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<sup>27</sup>Garrett's identification of degrees of consciousness with degrees of power of thinking presents some insolvable problems which have been pointed out by LeBuffe:

Without further qualifications on Spinoza's theory, what is to stop us from conceiving of a more powerful mind all of whose ideas are less conscious than those in a less powerful mind? In such a case, one might wonder what it means to say that the more powerful mind is more conscious.

(Theories about Consciousness in Spinoza's *Ethics*, 557)

I would add to LeBuffe's objection the fact that Garrett's interpretation makes quite inexplicable how the mind can be conscious of any affect of sadness and pain, related to a diminishment of its power of thinking and perfection (see E3p11 and the relevant scholium, as well as E3Ad3). Della Rocca's account (*Spinoza*), instead, seems to entail that the more confused an idea is, the less the mind is conscious of it, which conclusion is at odds with Spinoza's claim that the human mind is conscious of its striving insofar as it has both adequate and inadequate ideas (E3p9d). As to Nadler's view, I think it would make sense only if we assumed that the complexity of the body directly caused the mind to become conscious of its mental states (which is correctly excluded by Nadler himself: '[t]his would violate the causal and explanatory separation that exists between the attributes of Thought and Extension in Spinoza's parallelism', he writes [*'Spinoza and Consciousness'*, 591]). However, if consciousness is simply the expression in thought of bodily complexity – i.e. 'a function of (because identical with) a mind's internal complexity' (*'Spinoza and Consciousness'*, 592) – , no mind could isolate and be conscious of very simple ideas, such as primitive, non-analysable notions.

to the definition of 'adequate cause' in E3d1; C.I, 492/G.II, 139). In either case, degrees of consciousness of one's own ideas – whether they are adequate or not – are not mentioned, nor is there anything in E2p13s which may suggest that the transparency of a mode of thought may depend on, or be affected by the same criteria.

Why then does Spinoza adopt the terminology related to consciousness in the Fifth Part of the *Ethics*? I believe that the answer can be found at the end of E5p20s, where Spinoza declares that he will henceforth 'pass to those things which pertain to the mind's duration without relation to the body' (C.I, 606/G.II, 294; see also E5p40s). Since Spinoza's focus now concerns the true knowledge that our mind can have of itself and its eternity, Spinoza turns to the vocabulary of consciousness, which he still uses to address the knowledge that we may have of our mind 'insofar as this is considered as a mode of thinking without relation to the object' (E2p21s).

If we attend to the common opinion of men, we shall see that they are indeed conscious of the eternity of their mind, but that they confuse it with duration, and attribute it to the imagination, or memory, which they believe remains after death.

(E5p34s; C.I, 611–612/G.II, 301–302)

According to Spinoza, it is true that '[t]he human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains which is eternal' (E5p23; C.I, 607/G.II, 295). Indeed, he claims that we perceive an idea in our mind (that is, in Spinoza's terms, we are conscious of it) that corresponds to the eternal part of the mind itself. However, he also adds, we must not confuse the eternity of our mind with the traditional account of the immortality of the soul – based, according to Spinoza, on the false belief in a prolonged duration of memory after all corporeal activities have ceased. To prevent this confusion, which would disrupt the thought-extension parallelism, Spinoza grounds the eternal part of our mind in its corporeal counterpart. He argues that when 'we feel and know by experience that we are eternal' (E5p23s; C.I, 607–608), what we perceive as eternal is in fact the idea 'that expresses the essence of the human body, under a species of eternity' (E5p22; C.I, 607/G.II, 295).

If now we turn to Spinoza's account of the third kind of knowledge, we notice that, in E5p29, Spinoza affirms that whatever our mind understands adequately (i.e. under a species of eternity) 'it understands [...] from the fact that it conceives the body's essence under a species of eternity' (C.I, 609/G.II, 298). Then, in E5p31d, he characterizes the idea of the essence of the body – that is, the eternal part of the mind – as 'the adequate, or formal, cause of the third kind of knowledge' (C.I, 610/G.II, 299). The third kind of knowledge is, in turn, defined by Spinoza as 'adequate knowledge

of the essence of things' (E5p25d; C.I, 608/G.II, 296).<sup>28</sup> Now, since '[p]articu-  
lar things are nothing but affections of God's attributes, or modes by which  
God's attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way' (E1p25c;  
C.I, 431/G.II, 68), Spinoza writes in E5p24 that '[t]he more we understand  
singular things, the more we understand God' (C.I, 608/G.II, 296). This  
assumption allows Spinoza to conclude, in E5p25d, that the more things  
we adequately understand through knowledge of the third kind, 'the  
more we understand God' (C.I, 608/G.II, 296). To sum up, knowledge of  
the third kind depends on the idea of the essence of the body as its ade-  
quate cause, and it involves adequate knowledge of (i.e. adequate ideas  
of) this idea and its object,<sup>29</sup> of the essences of things and of God. This is  
why Spinoza can affirm, in E5p31s, that 'the more each of us is able to  
achieve in this kind of knowledge, the more he is conscious of himself  
and of God'. For the same reason, I argue, in E5p39s he also affirms that  
'he who has a body capable of a great many things, has a mind which con-  
sidered only in itself is very much conscious of itself, and of God, and of  
things'.

According to my reading, Spinoza's latter statement does not concern the  
overall degree of awareness of a mind with respect to its own mental states,  
nor does it concern the degree of transparency of any idea – whether it is ade-  
quate or not – to the mind that perceives it. Rather, it concerns the kind of  
ideas that minds related to capable bodies can attain and be conscious of,  
through knowledge of the third kind.<sup>30</sup> As we have seen, the more the  
actions of a body depend only on its nature, the more adequate ideas of  
things can be conceived through the nature of the mind 'considered only  
in itself' (E5p39s), with the mind being the adequate cause of its own clear  
and distinct perceptions of itself, God and other things. Conversely, a body  
whose actions are heavily dependent on external causes must be related to  
a mind that, as long as the body is affected, knows itself and the things  
only partially and confusedly, through inadequate ideas of the affections of  
the body. In this sense, I believe that it is appropriate to read Spinoza's  
remarks in E5p39s regarding consciousness of oneself, God and the things,

<sup>28</sup>See also the definition in E2p40s2: 'this kind of knowing proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal  
essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things' (C.I, 478/G.II,  
122).

<sup>29</sup>According to E5p30, the mind knows both itself and the body under a species of eternity.

<sup>30</sup>LeBuffe makes a similar remark:

Spinoza does not write at E5p39s that more powerful minds have a higher degree of con-  
sciousness. He writes that such minds are more conscious of *themselves and of God and of  
things*. [...] Spinoza is characterizing a mind's conscious knowledge – understood on a cor-  
respondence theory of truth as in part a relation between its conscious ideas and their  
objects – and not a quality of experience, like intensity, that might plausibly be thought  
to indicate consciousness or degrees of consciousness without further discussion.

(Theories about Consciousness in Spinoza's *Ethics*, 559)



as the counterpart of the corollary and scholium of E2p29, where Spinoza deals with ideas of ideas of bodily affections insofar as they deliver inadequate knowledge, or consciousness, of our mind and its ideas of external things, and, therefore, of God. He writes:

So long as the human mind perceives things from the common order of nature, it does not have an adequate, but only a confused and mutilated knowledge of itself, of its own body, and of external bodies.

(E2p29c; C.I, 471/G.II, 114)

Still, we seemingly have no solid basis on which to claim that minds related to less capable, less powerful or less complex bodies than the human shall also necessarily be less conscious of the ideas that actually exist in them and constitute them. To be sure, if an individual's body can undergo only a few modifications, of which even fewer can be explained solely through the nature of the body, the corresponding mind will have few ideas and, among these ideas, even fewer adequate ones. As a result, that individual can be said to possess a very low degree of 'animation', according to both criteria expressed in E2p13s. Nevertheless, nothing prevents us from regarding such scarcely animated individual as being perfectly conscious of those few, confused ideas of its bodily affections actually constituting its mind.

#### 4. Two issues concerning Spinoza's panpsychism solved

Based on the elements put forth, I am convinced that Spinoza's way of accounting for consciousness in the *Ethics* is coherent. Yet, the limits of such an account are also evident, making Spinoza's theory barely palatable, if assumed outside its original context.<sup>31</sup> To reply to the questions raised at the beginning of the text, Spinoza explains the existence of consciousness in the same way as the simultaneous existence of bodies and minds: for any existing thing, minds included, there must exist a corresponding idea in God's thought, which perceives everything that occurs to its object with the same order and connection of causes. On such grounds, Spinoza's theory does not allow for any distinction between human and non-human minds via their consciousness, as it does not distinguish between conscious and unconscious ideas or minds at all. What are we to do, then, about the paradoxes ensuing from panpsychism?

Regarding the problem of non-human minds, I am persuaded that Spinoza would concede consciousness to any individual body that can be said to maintain an essential structure or unity between parts while performing a determinate action – according to his definitions of 'singular thing' and

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<sup>31</sup>I assume that the way in which Spinoza seems to conflate basic distinctions – such as those between self-knowledge and consciousness, or between phenomenal and access consciousness (see Block, 'On a Confusion about a Function of Consciousness') – may represent an obstacle in this sense.

'individual' (see E2d7, and E2d after E2p13).<sup>32</sup> In this regard, if we look outside the *Ethics*, we see Spinoza himself profiting from the universal applicability of his theory, with the purpose, once again, to demonstrate the origin of the human illusion of free will. In Ep58, he asks his reader to conceive of something 'very simple', such as a stone set into motion by an external cause. He states that what he is about to conclude about the stone, must also be concluded about 'any singular thing, however composite it is conceived to be, and however capable of doing many things', since everything in nature is causally determined to exist and produce effects in a fixed manner.

Conceive now, if you will, that while the stone continues to move, it thinks, and knows that as far as it can, it strives to continue moving. Of course, since the stone is conscious only of its striving, and not at all indifferent, it will believe that it is very free, and that it perseveres in motion for no other cause than because it wills to. This is that famous human freedom everyone brags of having, which consists only in this: that men are conscious of their appetite and ignorant of the causes by which they are determined.

(Ep58; C.II, 428/G.IV, 266)

One of the purposes of a theory of selective consciousness is to exclude the possibility, regarded as absurd, that bodies much simpler than humans may be somehow conscious of their (potentially very limited) corporeal and mental states. For Spinoza, however, to hypothesize that non-human minds could be conscious of themselves, and to draw conclusions from such a hypothesis, is apparently a viable option. The main concern that seems to prevent many scholars from ascribing such a radical view to Spinoza is, in Margaret Wilson's words, the common expectation 'that mentality is recognizable from behavior of a certain sort, and the absence of mentality from "behavior" of other sorts' ('Objects, Ideas and "Minds"', 130). Spinoza explicitly argues for the opposite thesis. We shall not expect the actions of an individual to be different, whether we conceive it uniquely as a body – and explain its essence, appetites and consequent behaviour through the laws of extension alone – or whether we conceive it as also provided with a striving mind, conscious of itself through the relevant ideas of its body's affections. For Spinoza, the presence of consciousness does not account for any specific difference in behaviour, since a body's way of behaving does not depend on the presence of consciousness at all.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup>In E2lem4–6 Spinoza calls such 'essential structure' the 'form' of the body (C.I, 461/G.II, 100–1). We have also seen that Spinoza defines the idea of the mind as 'the form of the idea, insofar as this is considered as a mode of thinking without relation to the object' (E2p21s). We may therefore conclude that as long as the body retains its form while striving to persevere in its being, the mind also retains its form, in parallel, which is in turn the object of the idea of the mind, or consciousness of such striving.

<sup>33</sup>See also E2p7s:

So long as things are considered as modes of thinking, we must explain the order of the whole of nature, or the connection of causes, through the attribute of thought alone. And

The second problem related to Spinoza's panpsychism is that the mind must perceive and be conscious of everything that happens in the body. Since we cannot rely on any distinction between conscious and unconscious perceptions of bodily states and affections, it follows that for a possible solution we may only turn to what 'everything that happens in the body' signifies, in Spinoza's terms. This is also suggested by the fact that, in Spinoza's framework, both the limits and contents of our experience of the external world and of ourselves are provided by the affections of our body.<sup>34</sup> Solving this problem, therefore, requires explaining what accounts for an affection of the body and what constitutes the actual essence of a body, or its striving. This is not a problem related to Spinoza's philosophy of mind anymore, but to his account of bodily individuation. As far as I can infer from Spinoza's sketchy remarks on this topic, an individual, or any complex body, corresponds to a functional unity of parts, defined each time by the way in which the parts cooperate in the production of a single effect (see again E2d7 and E2d after E2p13). From this point of view, not everything that exists and occurs under the skin of a human body, so to speak, necessarily accounts for the definition of a particular affection, nor does the definition of a human body's actual striving or appetite demand the simultaneous involvement of all the organic parts (and subparts) that we usually associate with our corporeal architecture. For example, Spinoza regards memories as the mental correlate of corporeal 'impressions, or traces' of past affections (E3post2; C.I, 493/G.II, 139) that a body retains and carries along with itself, as it were. Yet, the presence of such traces does not always concur in determining a body's actual striving or impulses. In such cases, there is no compelling reason to consider them as part of the actual essence of the body, since its definition does not depend on them. By contrast, when the body's current appetite and impulses are efficaciously modified through the mediation of past corporeal images, their corresponding ideas will also exist in the mind. In that case, the mind will be said to 'recollect' past things

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insofar as they are considered as modes of extension, the order of the whole of nature must be explained through the attribute of extension alone.

(C.I, 452/G.II, 90)

A consequence of this view is that, with the same legitimacy with which we can regard all minds as 'spiritual automata', in Spinoza's terms (TIE85; C.I, 37/G.II, 32), their corporeal correlates can be coherently conceived as 'philosophical zombies', to borrow a contemporary expression (see Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind*, 94–5).

<sup>34</sup>By referring to E3post1, Malinowski-Charles (*Affects et conscience chez Spinoza*) and Marshall (*The Spiritual Automaton*) argue that only affects count as conscious ideas, in Spinoza's account, assuming an affect corresponds to an affection involving an increase or a decrease in one's body's power of acting and, hence, a relevant sensation of joy or sadness in the mind. I find this interpretation a bit reductive, as well as possibly contradicted by E3p15d. In fact, I can conceive of many ways in which my body's actual striving or impulses undergo changes that my mind consciously perceives, without involving any affect of joy or sadness, or any apparent variation in my body's power of acting (e.g. I turn my head to the left, then to the right, in a dark room).

(E2p18).<sup>35</sup> In short, Spinoza's functional account of the human body seems *prima facie* sufficiently flexible to adjust, at any time, the range of our essential bodily activities to those perceived by the mind, without resorting to the existence of unconscious ideas.<sup>36</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

To conclude, even though I hardly believe that we could ever succeed in tracking down the access to an account of selective consciousness in Spinoza, I do not impute the reasons for such failure to the way in which Spinoza constructs his theory in the *Ethics*. Any difficulty found in this sense, rather, depends on the unjustified assumption, seconded by many scholars, that 'without the ability to distinguish conscious from nonconscious individuals, Spinoza's theory cannot be a defensible account of consciousness' ('Consciousness in Spinoza's Philosophy of Mind', 270). As I hope to have sufficiently demonstrated, from Spinoza's point of view, and for the sake of his immediate purposes, not only did he not need to resort to a selective account of consciousness – he seemingly never intended to, either. Seen under this light, panpsychism should not cause much concern for Spinoza readers. As I mentioned in the introduction, it is a consequence of some more fundamental (though not the least paradoxical) theses, on which much of the Spinozist system is grounded: that an individual's mind is an idea existing in God's thought, and that everything is fully determined to exist and to act in each of God's attributes according to the eternal necessity of nature's laws. If we are willing to concede such atypical premises, then we can also accept the quite unusual conclusion that each finite being – as it may be figured within a Spinozist framework – can be consistently conceived of as a 'spiritual automaton', endowed with a corresponding mind and relevant consciousness of itself.

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<sup>35</sup>In E2p17d2 Spinoza proposes a hypothetical outline as to how the process of impression and recollection of images may generally happen in human bodies.

<sup>36</sup>Consequently, to the extent to which external objects become more and more instrumental in the way we perceive and act in the world, they can be coherently considered integral parts of our bodies. This account seems to have some affinity with the 'extended mind' theory (see Clark and Chalmers, 'The Extended Mind').

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